

Verses to Men  
by Peggy Webbing

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# VERSES TO MEN

*By*  
PEGGY WEBLING.





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THE LOVERS' EVOLUTION.

DRAWING BY

LEO BATES.





# VERSES TO MEN

BY

PEGGY WEBLING.

---

## THE LOVERS' EVOLUTION.

How gladly will I turn the page  
That tells me of the "how" and "when,"  
Before the neolithic age  
And men were unevolved as men.

If you will help me in the search  
To find ourselves, just you and me :  
You'll never leave me in the lurch?  
Turn back the volume—let us see !

We two existed, soul and soul,  
We two existed, heart and heart,  
Or little bits, if not the whole,  
One cell, perhaps, just split apart ;

Or floating in etheric mist,  
Two wavelets on the sea of space,  
Before the earth and sun had kissed,  
Two bubbles, bubbling to our place.

We met—and burst ! And then we slept  
(If bubbles can be said to sleep),  
While on the lazy eons crept,  
From height to height, from deep to deep ;

Until we chanced again to meet,  
In fire and lava, smoke and flame ;  
Ah, dear one ! Recollect the heat  
And burning fury when we came !

The great volcanos hissed and broke,  
And shook the earth with horrid crash,  
And you and I went up in smoke,  
And dropped together, ash in ash.

When next we stirred no doubt the shock  
Of plunging worlds, in storm and strain,  
Had given us the form of rock,  
For you were hard and I was plain.

We could not move, and all alone  
We stood upon a desert bare ;  
For you were stone, and I was stone,  
But we exchanged a stony glare.

Then I was split and you were cleft,  
And downward to our ruin thrust,  
Till there was nothing of us left  
Except a little heap of dust.

And after that we slept away  
Long centuries of flood and flow,  
Until there dawned the happy day  
When all the earth began to grow.

Then you became a blade of grass,  
Pale and feeble, long and dank,  
And I became—well, let it pass—  
'Twas something weedy, wet and rank.

We did not fall again it seems  
Into the old unconscious nap,  
For we had known the dawn of dreams,  
And felt the first faint stir of sap.

So we evolved, through stem and blade,  
At last—O bliss without alloy !—  
We wakened in the sun and shade  
To bask in vegetable joy.

O ! Vegetable love unknown  
To petty seedlings of to-day !  
For we were glorious—overgrown—  
Huge monsters on the earth we lay ;

Just like the sun, or like the moon,  
O darlings of a tropic clime !  
In solid circles, noon to noon,  
We grew and grew to golden prime.

Gigantic fungi did abound,  
And oozy plants with lobe and ball  
Of gruesome colour grew around ;  
The grass was like a forest tall.

The blazing sunshine pouring down,  
With soft and sultry, drenching dew,  
Tanned and burnt us copper-brown,  
And still we grew, and grew, and grew !



We did not think, we could not speak ;  
We had no language to express  
Our feelings, resting cheek to cheek,  
Supine and perfect, huge caress !

We ripened, rotted, side by side,  
Without remorse, or grief, or toil—  
For so we lived and so we died,  
And passed into the waiting soil.

But we had reached the perfect hour  
Of all eternity, my own,  
It was the very fruit and flower  
Of rapture, dearest, we had known.

Let us recall that luscious place,  
The melting dew, the azure sky,  
The silence and the round embrace—  
*Two perfect pumpkins*—you and I !

Progenitors of every kind  
Of vegetable yet to be,  
Within our bronzed and glowing rind  
They lived in dreams for you and me ;

The mangle-wurzzle and the swede,  
Potatoes and the marrow mild ;  
The water-melon, full of seed,  
Gay carrots and the parsnip wild ;

The dainty radish, red and white,  
And every gourd that Nature knows,  
Still soaring upward, height to height,  
To cabbage—broccoli—and rose.

The fancy reels ! We pause and pant  
Our wondrous dreams recalling thus,  
O, dearest ! every salad—plant—  
Aye, every pickle sprang from us !

O, happy fate ! We've met again,  
We're just the same, heart, brain and will,  
My cucumber ! Most cool of men !  
O, take me ! I'm a turnip still !

## TO NICHOLAS.

O, Nicholas, I love you well,  
So well!  
The hour has come and I will tell,  
Just tell.  
We met, you smiled, I don't upbraid,  
Upbraid,  
But still I know you only played,  
Idly played.  
We tossed the ball with laugh and jest,  
Foolish jest,  
Touched hands, by chance, and all the rest—  
All the rest!  
O, Nicholas! I thought you grand,  
So grand!  
But you? You didn't understand,  
Understand.  
I loved your strength, adored your might,  
Such might,  
I could not bear you out of sight,  
My sight.  
I drew you near with all my charms,  
Poor charms!  
I held you close within my arms,  
My arms.  
O, Nicholas, you loved me then,  
Me then!  
But you forgot, forgot me when—  
Ah, when—  
When *she* drew near with many gifts,  
Sweet gifts,  
And all the joy that youth uplifts,  
Uplifts.  
You smiled again, on her you smiled,  
She smiled,  
With just the same old games beguiled,  
Beguiled.  
O, Nicholas, I saw you kiss,  
One kiss!  
But I forgive you even this,  
Forgive you this!  
I'll let you go—I'll let it pass—  
All pass!  
Alas, O Nick! O, Nick, alas!  
Alas!  
For I am old, but you and she,  
You and she,  
Are very young—both under three,  
Under three.

## FOUR YOUNG MEN.

I can recall an era when  
I fell in love with four young men!  
I worshipped and admired them—hush!  
I'd like to whisper, with a blush,  
Although perchance I'll be derided,  
All the passion was one-sided.  
My father brought them to our house;  
I sat as quiet as a mouse  
The while he called them each by name,  
And told my mother how he came  
To know them well—years acquainted—  
And very cunningly he painted  
The kind of men they were, and she  
(Without a single thought of me),  
Declared they should no longer roam,  
And so they made themselves at home  
Within our house, with welcome hearty,  
Henceforth we boarded all the party!  
They slept within the misty gloom  
Of corners of the drawing-room.  
They joked and sang for our delight,  
And entertained us every night,  
Each with each in friendship vying  
To make us laugh, or set us crying,  
With stories of their skill in fight—  
For they were soldiers—and the might  
Of love. Ah me! 'Twas love that stirred  
My little heart, and every word  
Made me love them more, and glory  
In the splendour of their story.  
But when I praised them and I raved  
Of all the dangers they had braved,  
My father yawned, my mother smiled  
And said that they were "rather wild,"  
While both declared their fights and passion  
Were very fine, if out of fashion.  
But I was faithful to romance,  
The kind my lovers knew in France.  
Yes, I was faithful to the Four,  
Indeed I loved them more and more—  
I love them still, why not confess it?  
Although perhaps you wouldn't guess it,  
For I am very changed since then,



But they have never changed—young men  
They will remain, from age to age,  
The heroes of a noble page,  
Full of joy, and dash, and pathos,  
Oh, my D'Artagnan and Athos !  
Oh, my Porthos, oh, the bliss  
Of loving you, my Aramis !  
Take my homage and my cheers—  
Brave, immortal Musketeers !

## MAN'S INSPIRATION

(AND THE CAUSE OF WOMAN'S LACK OF IT).

O, men who've flourished through the ages,  
You old philosophers and sages,  
All you poets who have written,  
You dreamers by Ambition bitten,  
You artists of the maul and mallet,  
Of brush and chisel, oils and palette,  
What has been the goal before you?  
What is still the star that's o'er you?  
What's the source of inspiration  
You will find in every nation?  
Woman! Woman! She's inspired you.  
Woman! Woman! She has fired you!  
Though you love her, or deceive her,  
Though you marry her, or leave her,  
Though she's sometimes out of fashion,  
When War, for instance, is your passion,  
You always do return to limn her,  
She always starts your rhyming primer.  
If Woman had not proved a roamer,  
Where would be your poet Homer?  
'Twas lovely Helen to discover  
His Muse pursued the Trojan lover,  
If Menelaus had been the tripper,  
Would any Greek have turned a skipper?  
Would any Greek have sailed the ocean?  
We hear 'em laughing at the notion.  
'Twas Woman, on a Summer even,  
Took your Dante up to Heaven  
To show him all the angel legions,  
(But left him at the lower regions).  
What of Petrarch's finest sonnet?  
The stamp of Laura is upon it.  
What of Shakespeare's poems and drama?  
Every play has got its charmer.  
Your Spenser's verses, light and airy,  
Revolve about a lady fairy.  
And even Milton felt the duty  
Of dwelling on the grace and beauty  
Of Adam's bride—and he was really  
Inclined to look on girls severely.  
No doubt your Shelley's voice is soaring  
Above Elysian fields, adoring

Lovely Woman, there you'd find him,  
 With Keats and Coleridge close behind him.  
 Wherever Byron's ghostly shade is,  
 You may be sure he's with the ladies.  
 And as for Burns, no pen surpasses  
 Your Robbie's to commend the lasses.  
 Now, if we turn to later glory  
 Of poets, 'tis the same old story.  
 Take Swinburne, Tennyson, or Browning—  
 Take 'em gay, or take 'em frowning—  
 'Tis Woman still who sends 'em winging,  
 'Tis Woman who inspires their singing.  
 Then all the artists, with their sketching,  
 In oils, or water, chalk, or etching.  
 As soon as they have learned to toddle  
 In Art, accept her for the model  
 Of perfect beauty—charming creature!—  
 And daub away at form and feature.  
 Yes, Man has ever raised his pæans  
 To lauding Woman through the eons,  
 But Woman lacks—may Heaven protect her!—  
 A being who can thus affect her.  
 She has but Man, and though he's teasing,  
 Provocative and very pleasing,  
 He's not a being (does he know it?)  
 To turn a woman to a poet.  
 Although she may (and does) adore him,  
 She really cannot kneel before him,  
 Although she does (or doesn't) doubt him,  
 She very soon knows all about him.  
 Although her faith is rarely shaken,  
 'Tis not his nature to awaken  
 The flash of genius, or rapture,  
 That artists from a woman capture.  
 In brief, he'll never, never tire her,  
 But don't expect him to inspire her.



TO AN ARTIST.

I see the moon——  
Well, ah, well!  
The hour is noon,  
In a dell,

No, in a pool——  
List, oh, list!  
I see a fool,  
In a mist.

Curve and dash——  
Hear, but hear!  
I hear the splash  
Of a tear.

The paint is green——  
Think, dear, think!  
I catch the sheen  
Of a drink.

A hawk I spy——  
Dream, love, dream!  
Or else a fly  
In the cream!

Fine! Divine!  
Rot? Not rot!  
I've found a line——  
No, a blot!

My heart is wrung,  
Frown, sweet, frown!  
The painting's hung  
Upside down!

In other words:—"Dear Mr. Browne,  
I saw your picture when in town.  
Now, is it London in a fog?  
Oh, no, I've found the catalogue—  
'Futurist Portrait of a Frog.'"

## TO A POET.

My poet! On the day we met  
You showed your love of poesy,  
For all the time we talked of rhyme—  
That is, of course, you talked to me,  
For I sat still with eyes a-glisten,  
Content to wonder and to listen.

Dear poet! Do you recollect  
The quatrain that you wrote for me?  
I read it twice, I read it thrice,  
(I think you called it Rhapsody),  
I read it in and out of season,  
Alas! It hadn't rhyme nor reason.

O poet! Then a rhythm play,  
Twelve sonnets and a parody,  
An epic long, a stack of song,  
And verses blank (how blank to me!)  
All these you jingled, hardly stopping,  
Like Mr. Wegg, you're always "dropping."

You poet! We have met to part!  
I'm bored to death with poetry.  
You talk in feet—then down the street  
I wish they'd trot you far from me.  
I've thrown aside my glasses rosy  
To find you're dull—and dry—and *prosy*!

## CONSISTENT MAN.

Consistent Man would have his wife  
Devote to him the whole of life,  
Putting all other claims aside  
The day that she becomes a bride.  
But though his mother is also wed  
Her husband does not count, instead  
Of *him* she should cherish most the one  
Whom she is proud to call her son.  
His sister's husband must also take  
Second place for her brother's sake,  
But woe if his daughter fails to see,  
However kind her brothers be,  
Whatever lovers fond may say,  
Father's the man she must obey.  
All other ladies should firmly claim  
Perfect freedom, in friendship's name,  
To ask his help who is always wise,  
Ready to order and advise,  
Domestic oracle and judge—  
O, Woman, you must never grudge  
To pay a tribute where you can  
To the consistency of Man!



## THE VICTORIAN PAPA.

I sing the Victorian Papa,  
I chant upon his pyre—  
Gone, like a dim and twinkling star,  
Gone, like the wealth of Tyre!  
Gone, like the power of ancient Rome,  
Lost to the world and us,  
Type of the early Briton's home,  
"Scrapped," like the old horse-'bus.  
Past, like the autocratic Czar,  
Knocked, like the Prussian, flat—  
I sing the Victorian Papa—  
Crushed, like his own silk hat.

---

Hear me proclaim, in tones Gregorian,  
In ancient days, called mid-Victorian,  
There dwelt within the British islands,  
Revered from Cornwall to the Highlands,  
A Person who, without apology,  
We place within the realm's hagiology  
(If that's a faulty rhyme, excuse it,  
I mean a Saint, so had to use it).  
A Being—or an Institution—  
Who'd won, no doubt by evolution,  
The highest place among the people ;  
He towered above them, like a steeple,  
Looking down upon the masses  
From out the lofty middle classes.  
Although he stalked in form majestic  
His greatest power was "pure domestic,"  
But still he knew, to do him credit,  
Indeed, he very often said it,  
How ably he could rule the nation  
And fill the most important station,  
For all his views were sound and hoary—  
A good, old bullet-headed Tory.  
But, as I said, he lacked expansion.  
His "House" was the domestic mansion,  
And there he ruled, firm, autocratic,  
Calm, but rarely diplomatic,  
Benign and never supercilious,  
In little matters, most punctilious ;  
By habit grave, 'twas hard to win a  
Smile from him except at dinner—  
That is, if he approved the dishes  
And found them equal to his wishes—  
Then he could smile, be even merry.

(A splendid judge of port and sherry),  
And tell you stories, long and prosy,  
The sort of tales that make you dozy,  
In lengthy sentences pedantic,  
They drove his own "home circle" frantic.  
His chief admirer, called Mama,  
Had studied, learned and knew Papa,  
Knew him in and out of season,  
Upheld his views, and thought it treason  
To press her own in any matter,  
Content to listen and to flatter,  
Proud to serve her lord and patron—  
Cophetua's bride become a matron.  
His boys displayed a different feeling  
That often lead to ne'er-do-weeling.  
His daughters were his greatest treasures,  
He ruled their faith, and work, and pleasures,  
He filled their minds with due sobriety  
In ways of feminine propriety,  
Approved their loves, or sent them packing,  
In brief, they never found him lacking  
In wisdom of parental carriage  
Till they were "given away" in marriage.  
All his friends were most respectable,  
And very good, if not delectable.  
He scorned or pitied ev'ry alien,  
Religious views, Episcopalian.  
Although his home was very pleasant,  
He loved the Past and loathed the Present,  
And looked upon the lower orders  
As victims of the base marauders  
Called Socialists—but all reforming,  
Or new ideas, would set him storming.  
He lived and died, to put it shortly,  
Aloof and pompous, proud and portly.

---

I chant the Victorian Papa,  
Who fell without a stab,  
And, arm in arm, with "dear Mama,"  
Fled, in a hansom cab!

Peer through the misty veil of Time,  
There you will see him loom,  
A stately ghost in whiskered prime,  
Blind to his certain doom.

I see the Victorian Papa,  
Dead, gone, with all his kith,  
Lost in the bygone days afar,  
A dream—a tale—a myth!

## WOMAN'S ADVANTAGE OVER MAN.

Be Man's the fame  
Of hero's name ;  
Be his the strife  
And thrill of life ;  
Be his a shower  
Of strength and power ;  
Of force and might,  
And glory bright—  
You do and can  
Deserve them, Man !

But Woman's bliss  
Much greater is.  
For love the best  
By Man possessed  
Is Woman's love,  
But joy above  
All he attains  
Is her's who gains,  
For life's short span,  
The love of Man.



### ANOTHER ON THE SAME THEME.

Man, however long you live,  
Whatever joys your life may give ;  
If pride and glory, praise and fame  
Be coupled with your work and name ;  
Or if you dwell in deep repose,  
With all the ease contentment knows ;  
Or if you strive and gladly feel  
The struggle and the stress of zeal ;  
Or if you idly throw away  
Your soul in pleasures of a day—  
Read this for truth, you never can  
Know Woman's rapture, loved by Man.

## TO MY FIRST LOVE.

When first we met—now let me see—  
I think that you were twenty-three,  
Both tall and straight, and very fair,  
With quite a shock of sunny hair.  
Your laughing, flashing, moody eyes  
Were just the colour of the ties  
From Liberty's I bought for you,  
A kind of tender, greyish-blue.  
'Twas in the days you loved to be  
In Socialist society,  
But of the William Morris kind,  
And gave your talent, heart and mind  
To work in decorative art  
For love of beauty, quite apart  
From any thought of mere success  
Such as common men possess.  
You lived in Chelsea at a place,  
"Hidden from the world's disgrace,"  
Where you could see the river flow,  
From out your attic panes, below,  
And read your Carpenter, or Yeats,  
And smoke your pipe, and eat your cates  
(Of oatmeal!). So you passed your days  
In working, loving, joy and praise,  
And floated, like a leaf on stream,  
From hope to hope, from dream to dream.  
You knew your London well, but still  
The yearning call of wood and hill  
Was ever echoed in your mind,  
You loved the sun, the rain, the wind,  
The earth below, the skies above,  
And more than all—you loved me, love!  
How oft you vowed, when I was nigh,  
That you would marry by and bye.

---

When last we met—now, let me see—  
You looked, say, forty-two or three,  
I will be kind, though truth to say  
Your hair (the little left) was grey.  
Your eyes—those flashing, laughing eyes!—  
Were dull as any pool that lies  
Beneath the glimmer of the moon,  
And "spectacles were quite a boon,"  
You said, and polished, with a smile,  
Your glasses, blinking all the while.

You spoke of Art and let me know  
You gave it up, oh, long ago!  
'Twas well enough in youth's brief day,  
But afterwards it didn't pay;  
Your father's business—really fine,  
'Twas something in the brewing line—  
Became your own and would increase,  
You did not doubt, in days of Peace,  
For after all, how near, how dear  
To Britain's heart is Britain's beer.  
You lived in town? "Oh, yes, oh, yes!  
I live in town, and I confess  
The country has no charms for me,  
Except the little bits I see  
When motoring—" And on you went,  
Still yarning on, as if you meant  
To wear me out with this and that,  
Of pleasant, desultory chat.  
I could not catch, from first to last,  
One far, faint echo of the Past.  
For nothing you have done to prove  
The promise of your early love—  
Except that you would married be,  
But (thank the Lord!) 'tis not to me.



## THREE LITTLE POEMS ON WILLIAM.

### 1. WHEN I WAS ON THE STAGE.

Billy clapped me when me met,  
From the shilling seats he sat in,  
Critics, you who love to get  
Notes and interviews,  
Put that in!

Say I rant, my voice is bad,  
Say no audience could enrapt be,  
Say I'm growing old, but add——  
Billy clapped me!

### 2. WHEN I WAS IN THE CHAIR.

It was a dull and sombre hall,  
With ugly pictures on the wall,  
With feeble lights, a platform bare,  
A hard, uncushioned, oaken chair——  
I took the chair!

A lengthy speech, with frequent pause,  
A poor debate and no applause——  
And then a change, a flash, a thrill,  
For you came in, I saw you, Bill,  
O, welcome, Bill!

Again the speaker rose—a hit,  
A burst of eloquence and wit,  
A happy hour, a joyous "Chair,"  
A big success, for you were there,  
I saw you there!

### 3. WHEN I WAS IN THE GARDEN.

For long I strayed in forest glade,  
Like Rosalind in Arden ;  
Until I found the magic ground  
Of an old-fashioned garden,  
My love has made, in sun and shade,  
And all around, sight, scent, and sound,  
It is a perfect garden.

The shapely box, the gaudy cox,  
The rose, the pink, the clover,  
The pansies dight, the daisies bright,  
Are planted by my lover.  
The bloomy stocks, the vivid phlox—  
At noon and night, in dear delight—  
Are tended by my lover.

I prize them all, in Spring and Fall,  
When it is fair or showery ;  
But one I prove my heart can move,  
A little plant and flowery.  
The plant I call the best of all—  
The one I love the rest above—  
Sweet William, sweet and flowery !

## ODE TO A HUSBAND.

(AN ATTEMPT TO WRITE WHEN INSPIRED BY HIS PRESENCE.)

- "Belovéd, when I take my pen  
To write my thoughts of thee,  
All other wise and fearless men,  
However great they be——"  
(Is that my husband at the gate?  
Well, Thomas, you are rather late).
- "—However wise they be—O thou  
Art perfect in my sight,  
I loved thee as I love thee now——"  
(It is a drenching night!)
- "When first the star of love arose——"  
(My dear, you'd better change your clothes).
- "The star of love arose——" (What's that?  
Oh, Thomas, but you're wet!  
There's quite a pool upon the mat,  
I see you're dripping yet).
- "The star of love——" (You needn't shout,  
I'll come and get the dry things out).
- "The star of——" (There he is again!  
Of course I'll help you, dear.  
That star must set it's very plain),  
"O love, when thou art near  
'Tis like a soft, sweet summer breeze  
That faintly murmurs in the trees.
- "So wise thou art, so calm and still,  
So gentle and so strong——  
(Well, Thomas, do you feel a chill?  
My dear, you may be wrong.  
You're nervous, as I said before,  
Don't wake the children! Shut the door).
- "So gracious and benign thou art  
In life's uncertain storm,  
So dauntless is that noble heart——"  
(I'll make your slippers warm).
- "That I shall never, never tire——"  
(You'd better let me stir the fire).

- "That I shall never tire of thee——"  
 (What's that? I'll get your pipe,  
 The matches, Thomas? Let me see——  
 There, dear!) "The hour is ripe  
 When I will say, love, lord, and friend,  
 On thee alone I do depend.
- "On thee alone! I shrink, alack!  
 In weakness from the strife——"  
 (Do put this cushion at your back),  
 "And petty ills of life,  
 Thou bearest all without a fear——"  
 (I'm sorry if it's draughty, dear).
- "Thou dost not brood, and no regret  
 Thy calm reflections stay,  
 But trifles thou wilt ne'er forget——"  
 (The plumber came to-day.  
 You meant to let the landlord know?  
 I did, my dear, some time ago).
- "To ev'ry duty thou dost fly,  
 And fond affection seek——"  
 (I wrote your Mother, by the bye,  
 Her birthday is next week,  
 You know how happy she will be  
 In saying you reminded me).
- "In happy days without annoy,  
 Of pleasure and of ease,  
 I watch thee with a silent joy——"  
 (Oh, Thomas, what a sneeze!)
- "Thy ways are mild, thy thoughts sublime——"  
 (Yes, dear, it's nearly dinner time).
- "O, struggle on, my king of men,  
 And work as ne'er before——"  
 (You reached the office after ten,  
 And left at half-past four,  
 But found the time to go through *Punch*?  
 I'm glad you had a ripping lunch).
- "I stand aside and proudly gaze  
 To see thee battle on——"  
 (My dear, I always spend my days  
 The same when you are gone.  
 I tend the children, cook, and sew.  
 One can't get any help you know).



“ I watch thee giving all thy life  
In love that will not pass,  
Still toiling for thy bairns and wife——”  
(Oh, yes, I cut the grass,  
You’ll be surprised at such a crop,  
’Twas done before I went to shop).

“ My own, for better or for worse  
I took thee, and I hold——”  
(Thank goodness, I’m a willing nurse,  
I think you’ve got a cold,  
But really, dear, you needn’t fret,  
Or send for a physician yet).

“ O husband, let me end my rhyme  
In proof of love for thee  
By saying this——” (it’s feeding time !)  
“ Belovéd, thou shalt see——”  
(Your dinner, Thomas, in a trice,  
And how I *pray* you’ll find it nice !)

## WORDS OF WARNING.

### 1. TO YOUNG BACHELORS.

Do not fear when She is sweet,  
For man is custom-trained to meet  
The dangers of an open fight.  
You need not tremble at the sight  
Of cunning Woman when she's moved  
To talk of love and being loved,  
Although it may be very charming,  
Take my word, it's not disarming,  
She's done it since the First of Days—  
You surely know her little ways?

But if she does not drop her eyes,  
And if she never, never sighs,  
And if she truly seems to see  
The joys of camaraderie,  
And makes you feel you really can—  
Well, treat her very like a man,  
O, then beware and fly to cover,  
Unless you want to be her lover,  
For Friendship is her chief, alack!  
Of modern methods of attack.

### 2. TO BRIDEGROOMS.

A business maxim very sound  
In Woman's brain is often found.  
I warn you, lovers in your pride  
At having won a perfect bride,  
While still you marvel if it's true  
The angel can have chosen you,  
To recollect her settled plan  
Was this, in meeting every man—  
“No reasonable offer refused.”

## A TINY LOVE-SONG.

The softest green  
In petals seen,  
The finest hue  
Of tender blue  
    We ever wist——  
    'Twas Love-in-a-mist.

We joyed to meet  
In meadow sweet,  
And plucked the flower  
Of Summer's hour——  
    O, happy tryst,  
    With Love-in-a-mist.

We met again  
In Autumn rain,  
And far and near  
The world was drear,  
    But, darling, list!  
    O, Love-in-a-mist!

The fairest day  
Of blushing May,  
Was not to me  
So fair to see——  
    For then I kissed  
    My love in a mist.

*Verses in a different Vein.*





## TO A BOY OF LONG AGO.

How wonderful it is to see  
The first buds on the dark ash tree :  
How wonderful it is to hear  
The cuckoo calling far and near :  
How wonderful it is to find  
A poppy shaking in the wind :  
How wonderful it is to know  
Where the early violets grow :  
How wonderful it is to look  
Into the shallow, limpid brook :  
More wonderful it is to dream  
Beside a sleepy, silent stream :  
Most wonderful it is to prove,  
By all these wonders, God is love.  
For wonderful it is to feel  
His goodness o'er the quiet heart steal.  
He loved and made each tiny plant :  
He knows and helps each busy ant ;  
From hand of His there flutters forth  
The little, blue-winged, timid moth :  
He paints the harebell in the dell ;  
He hides the scarlet pimpernel . . . .  
So out of all eternity  
A perfect hour for you and me  
He gave—remember, e'er you smile,  
If it is worth our Father's while  
To care for all the living things  
That creep, or fly with tiny wings,  
It surely pleases Him to joy  
A little girl and little boy?  
He pointed us the way to roam  
That day we wandered far from home,  
He led us to the water's edge,  
And there we found among the sedge  
A wild forget-me-not—His care  
And loving thought had planted there.

## VERSES IN MEMORIAM.

### I. MY FATHER.

I wander alone, and wander still  
On the open road and the winding hill,  
Where the meadows roll and the woodland dips,  
And a quiet river a-dreaming slips  
Through whisp'ring rushes and list'ning sedge,  
And the willow weeps at the water's edge.  
I wander alone, and I watch the Sun  
Die in the West when his course is run,  
And I see how the Day grows weak and pale  
As Night draws near in a starry veil.

I wander alone, and wander still  
On the Road of Life, and the winding hill  
Is leading me down to the River of Death,  
And the air is faint as a dying breath.  
I ponder and dream on the days alas !  
Gone for ever—but Night will pass,  
And then I may find, as the Morning breaks,  
And far from the grave my soul awakes,  
The splendour and joy that I hoped to know  
In my life upon earth so long ago !

The open road and the winding hill  
May still be there, and the meadows still,  
And the song of the lark and nightingale,  
And the lovely wood and the tender vale.  
Then I shall meet, at close of the day,  
My Father, who wandered the first away,  
Away from our Home, and he shall hear,  
However we changed, we held him dear.  
And both—as we wander side by side—  
Will know that we live and forget we died.

## 2. WILLIAM DE MORGAN.

If we open wide his pages  
Out will flock a crowd of friends—  
Ev'ry age o' the Seven Ages,  
Where Life up-springs, floods, and ends.  
Who can tell us the beginning  
Of those tales of mirth and tears?  
All the ripe and seasoned spinning  
In the noble work of years.  
Enough that we have prized his stories;  
Enough that we have read and know  
"Joseph Vance" and "Lossie's" glories,  
"Liza-anne" and "Uncle Mo." \*  
Deck his tomb with oleaster  
Of fair Italia's valleys wide,  
But in the midst—oh, let us cast a  
Little tuft of London Pride!

\* Characters in Mr. De Morgan's novels.



### 3. HENRY PAGE.

I close my door  
And pace the floor  
At the end of the weary day.  
I feel the woes,  
The toil and throes  
Of the War which has passed away.

I find the gloom  
Within my room  
Of the outer world, and I hear  
The splash of rain  
Against the pane  
As the hours of the night draw near.

In darkling mood  
I sit and brood  
And the flame of my heart burns low,  
And shadows fall  
Across the wall,  
With the shadows of long ago.

The table's bright  
With circled light  
Of the reading lamp, but around  
The darkness grows,  
And darkly flows  
Like a silent stream to the ground.

I sit and dream,  
And down the stream  
I float to a haven of rest,  
Till I forget  
The vague regret  
And the sorrows that fill my breast.

I hear the chime  
Of passing Time  
As it backward slips, and I feel,  
With senses stirred,  
A whispered word,  
And a presence about me steal.

I lift my eyes,  
Without surprise,  
And I look at a vacant chair,  
Set in the shade  
By firelight made,  
And I know who is waiting there.

I see my friend!  
May God forefend  
I should tremble, or blanch with fear,  
To meet the dead,  
A soul that's fled,  
When memory draws it near.

I find his gaze,  
Without amaze,  
Is bent on my face, and I see—  
'Tis very strange,  
But ev'ry change  
Is not in my friend, but in me.

The look he wears,  
The form he bears  
Are the same, and the truth I tell,  
He speaks my name,  
And just the same  
Is the voice that I knew so well.

The veil of years,  
The mist of tears,  
The struggle, the toil, and the pain,  
The fret and strife,  
The storm of life,  
Are gone, but the joys remain.

The lonely day  
Is far away  
When he left us, and much since then  
Of crown and cross,  
Of gain and loss,  
Have I learned in the world of men.

But you, my friend—  
What journey's end  
Has been yours, and what of the start?  
Has Time flowed on,  
Since you were gone,  
As it flows through a beating heart?

Have you, evolved,  
The problem solved  
Of the meaning of Life and Death?  
What do you know  
Of joy and woe,  
Do they pass with the passing breath?

Have love and hope  
A wider scope,  
Do you think as you thought of old?  
What mystic seas,  
And sun and breeze,  
Have you found as a tale untold?

Teach me your faith,  
Belovéd wraith!  
In the aura around your head  
I see a light,  
A glory bright,  
As the clouds of the morning shed.

The secret tell!  
O, what befell  
When your life in this world was o'er?  
We grasp and fail  
To lift the veil,  
But for you—you have gone before—

You know the truth,  
In love and ruth  
Give an answer, the time draws near  
When we must part,  
With yearning heart  
I am waiting—O, let me hear . . .

. . . . .

I heard him speak!  
Across my cheek  
I felt the rush of the Spring;  
We seemed to stand  
In meadow-land  
At an hour when the skylarks sing.

We talked of Rome,  
And Jason's home,  
When the Argonauts sailed the sea,  
The tales of Greece,  
The Golden Fleece—  
All the books that he read to me.

We laughed and strayed  
Where fairies played,  
In the heat of the Summer noon;  
We heard the song,  
Sad, sweet and long,  
Which the mermaids sing to the moon.

We saw the sail  
Amidst the gale  
Of the Mariner's boat on its quest,  
The seaman old  
Whose tale was told  
In the ear of the Wedding Guest.  
We saw the gleam  
Adown the stream  
Of the flash of King Arthur's brand,  
And ladies fair,  
With golden hair,  
And their knights of a magic land.  
Then up and down  
Old London town,  
In the twilight hour o' the day,  
When overhead  
The skies are red,  
And the smoke is a misty grey.  
When shadows meet  
Across the street,  
And the distant roar and the hum  
Have died away,  
At close of day,  
To the sound of a muffled drum.  
We lightly walked,  
And still we talked,  
But never a word did he speak  
Of days beyond,  
Or broken bond  
Of his life—I forgot to seek,  
For all the while  
His dear old smile  
Would draw me away to the hours  
Of laugh and jest,  
Of work and rest,  
Of beauty—and youth—and flowers . . .

A silence falls  
Within the walls  
Once again of my little room.  
The firelight gleams,  
The lamplight streams,  
Once more in the gathering gloom.  
The vacant chair  
Is standing there,  
No sound is there here, no sight,  
To prove he came  
And spoke my name—  
But I know we have met to-night.



## JAPANESE LOVE-LETTERS.

### I. TO A PAINTER.

The whole of Heaven I saw  
In a sweep of your brush's blue ;  
The sunny surface of the sea  
In a fish you drew  
For me.

The bloom of almond I felt  
With colour and perfume blent,  
The happy Springtime still to be,  
In a blossom you sent  
To me.

The sound of music I heard,  
And murmuring streams awoke,  
With caged song-birds all set free,  
In a word you spoke  
To me.

2. TO FALSE TOSHIMICHI.

As 'prisoned sunshine leaps  
From a burning tree ;  
So my heart was fired  
And flamed for thee.

The empty prison turned  
To ashes' deadened hue ;  
So my heart burnt out—  
With thee untrue.

### 3. TO A YOUTH OF NARA.

From the black earth  
To water fair,  
From water to  
The finer air,  
The lotus springeth up ;  
'Tis thus she grows  
From dark to light,  
Until at last  
The heavens bright  
With sunshine fill her cup.

'Tis so with thee !  
From darkling fears  
To lucid thoughts  
With bliss and tears,  
The poet lifts his eyes—  
He knows the earth  
Is but a dream,  
Beauty mirrored  
In a stream—  
When heavenly visions rise.

#### 4. TO A GARDENER.

By Nature's fiat  
The roses riot  
In damask and crimson and white ;  
With beauty springing,  
And perfume flinging,  
In gardens of dear delight.

But all the roses  
That June discloses,  
Blooming and blushing and fair,  
Glowing as fire is,  
Bow to the iris,  
Flower and flag of the air !

Take you the posies,  
Sweet English roses,  
Sending once more if you can—  
Belovéd, as token  
Of promise unbroken—  
The flag of your own Japan.



5. TO SILENT MASAO.

The secret of the East  
I think I could discover,  
If I but understood  
My strange and stealthy lover.

I look into his eyes,  
So dark and passion-gleaming—  
But O! his soul is rapt  
In deep and mystic dreaming.

6. TO AKIRA.

Look at the magnolia tree  
In its glory, thou wilt see  
However near a blossom's found,  
On lowest branches, to the ground,  
Its waiting chalice, purple-white,  
Is lifted to the heaven's light.  
So, Akira, I uplift  
Heart and lips—an empty gift  
Till thou shalt fill them from above,  
In passing, with a beam of love.

7. TO OSAMU.

When shall I cease to love thee?  
When lilies cease to blow,  
And when there falls on Fuji  
The last of Heaven's snow!





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